

University of Illinois at Chicago  
Political Science 200  
*Methods of Political Science*

Summer Term, 2004

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This course will provide students the opportunity to learn the various methods of social science research by conducting their own research projects. We will also spend some time reading and discussing some of the classic works in which the basic questions regarding the scientific investigation of social behavior were defined.

Research methods addressed:

1. The ethnography;
2. The open-ended survey of opinion;
3. The closed-ended survey of opinion;
4. Micro-political analysis (analyzing legislative, judicial, executive actions, or actions of the general public, such as voting);
5. Text analysis (analyzing the content of a law); and
6. Macro-economic analysis.

Classic works of methodology to be discussed:

1. Aristotle, *Politics*;
2. Machiavelli, *The Prince*;
3. Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*; and
4. Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*.

Grade composition:

- 60% Research project assignments (6x10%, with one project for each method listed);
- 40% Discussion notes and homework assignments.

The reading list and assignments will be distributed separately.

Any student with special instructional needs should consult with me at the beginning of the course.

Projects (60 points)

1. Ethnography (10 points)  
Conduct an ethnographic study of some small, informal group. Your study should be based on at least five interviews and your report should include:
  - o a brief description of the group;
  - o the contexts for group interaction;
  - o the roles within the group;
  - o any significant subgroups;
  - o norms of behavior;
  - o shared beliefs; and
  - o any rituals and their meaningfulness.
2. An open-ended survey of opinion. (10 points)
3. A closed-ended survey of opinion. (10 points)
4. Text analysis: analysis of the contents of a law. (10 points)  
Choose five enacted Public Laws from a Congress, and construct for each a table describing:
  - o the provisions of the law;
  - o the type of each provision (allocation of money, rule, or both); and
  - o the individual, group, or locale to which the provision applies.
5. Macropolitical behavior analysis: legislative voting. (10 points)  
For each of the five laws chosen for text analysis, report the voting results for the House and Senate Resolutions constituting that law. The report should be presented in two tables: one summarizing the voting in the Senate and the other summarizing the voting in the House. Each table should include as column headings "Votes for," "Votes against," "Non-votes," and "Total votes;" and as row headings "Democrats," "Republicans," "Independents," and "Total members".
6. Experimentation (10 points)  
Read and describe the results of the assigned experimental study.

Discussion notes on the "classics" (20 points)

Miscellaneous homework assignments (20 points)